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formerly The American Music Lover



J. S. Mawrey



Edited by

PETER HUGH REED

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THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

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The American RECORD GUIDE

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Formerly The American Music Lover

Editorial Notes

A letter from an old Paris reader, from whom we have not heard since 1941, reached us last month. In it, he gives us more information on musical activities during the Occupation than we have seen elsewhere in print. Here is what Monsieur A. Rodocanachi writes:

"The number of recordings made over here these past four years may perhaps not be as important as that of those made in the United States or England during the same period; but one could hardly have expected more under the 'raw material' conditions the French industry in general had to face. The chief obstacle to record reproduction was and still is the coal shortage; next in importance came the lack of record-dough ingredients. This latter problem was solved by resorting to an inferior mixture and to the adoption of the Pathé pressing system, in which under each record face (of a better quality) was inserted a paper layer to separate it from the rest of the record, which was of a very coarse mixture. [This process is, of course, that of the laminated surfaced. — Ed.]

"Although the matrices, and of course the masters and mothers too, are said to be of standard quality, the records pressed nonetheless left much to be desired as to reproduction, surface noise and durability. Under such conditions one cannot always judge the artistic and technical merits of a recording, and I, for one, did not care to add any such records to my collection. The worst of it all is that Pathé-Marconi seem very proud to announce that they have enough material in stock to issue some quality records for the next three years or so. But this remains to be seen.

"Notwithstanding their shortcomings,

these records have been selling very well and seem to be more in demand than were records in pre-war days. I believe it must only seem so, as what with pressing difficulties and the Germans dropping in unexpectedly and buying directly from the works the last two or three days' production, supply to dealers was very short.

"The Pathé-Marconi works, after six months of inactivity due to lack of coal, are going to start pressing soon at the rate of 10,000 discs a day. There will be records of all the trade marks on the French market. Pathé-Marconi started pressing over the records of Polydor and Telefunken three years ago, but since the matrices of these firms did not fit the Pathé-Marconi machines, each work had to be recorded anew on a P-M matrix from an ordinary commercial record. As French Polydor and Telefunken records left much to be desired before the war, you can easily imagine what the results of this dubbing process sounds like. But optimists say it might easily have been worse! I may as well mention here that Pathé-Marconi is the equivalent of E.M.I. in England and is in control of three trade marks — Gramophone, Columbia and Pathé.

"You may be interested to learn something of what we heard both from the radio and in public concerts, as well as from records, during the German occupation. We were permitted to listen in public to all kinds of music, provided it was not composed or performed by a non-Aryan. Mendelssohn, Bloch, Paul Dukas were among the composers banned. Despite this fact, quite a few (pre-war) recordings by Jewish artists were issued with the names of the artists omitted from the labels.

Many of Bruno Walter's and Casals' recordings were among these. I have been told that dance orchestras were not allowed to play music by Negro composers, but I must say I did not investigate this matter very far.

"French orchestras and soloists resumed their activities after the German invasion and attracted great audiences. That music had become an even greater solace than in ordinary times you can readily understand. The change in name of the Société des Concerts Colonne, you have undoubtedly heard about; it took the name of its late president Gabriel Pierné, since it appeared that the founder was of Jewish origin, a fact no one in France had ever thought about. Now that the Germans are gone, the Société resumed the founder's name.

"Besides the usual concerts and recitals, we had those given quite frequently by German orchestras and soloists touring France. The opportunities to hear first-class performances of good music were therefore frequent, and though many among us were loath to attend concerts that were but a part of German propaganda, the lure of good music tempted us. I must admit not to have been able to resist temptation on three occasions. I attended two concerts given by the chamber section of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Hans von Benda (a favorite of mine in pre-war days), and I also attended a performance of Mozart's *Seraglio* at the Opéra with a cast containing Erna Berger, H. Roswaenge and von Manowarda. The Benda programs included works by Bach, Mozart, Haydn and Roussel. These were exceptional performances.

"Other orchestras that toured France were Hans Diener's Collegium Musicum

and the complete Berlin Philharmonic, the latter under the direction of such men as Furtwaengler and von Karajan. I believe Furtwaengler gave a few concerts for workers in French factories. Among notable pianists to visit us were Elly Ney, Walter Gieseking and Wilhelm Kempff. The latter played a Mozart concerto at a Benda concert also.

"The Radio-Paris Symphony Orchestra consisting of French instrumentalists under Jean Fournet gave weekly public concerts which, of course, were also broadcast. The orchestra frequently played under foreign guest conductors, among them O. Kabasta, Willem Mengelberg and a Japanese conductor whose name I do not recall [probably Konoye—Ed.]. Mengelberg conducted the orchestra in a Beethoven cycle every year, giving two to three concerts a week over a period of one month. As I listened to these concerts, it seemed to me that age had begun to tell upon the Dutch maestro.

"First performances were given by the different French musical societies, mainly of works by French composers, such as J. Hubeau, M. Delannoy, M. Jaubert, etc. These were either at the Opéra or the Opéra Comique or in the concert hall or even on records. The most important works produced during this period, from the standpoint of critical acclaim, were Honegger's *La Danse des Morts* and *Jeanne d'Arc au Bouche*. German works given first performances in France included Pfitzner's opera *Palestrina* and Werner Egk's ballet *Joan von Farissa* and his opera *Peer Gynt*. The critics were unanimous in praise of these works, performed by artists of the Paris Opéra. As for me, I listened to *Palestrina* on the air for a little while, found it rather boring

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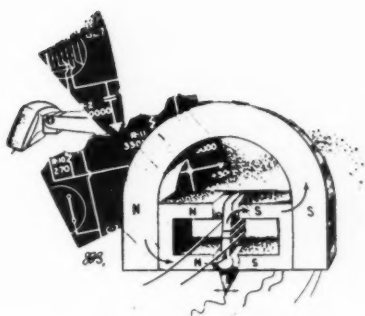
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NEEDLES, REPRODUCTION & SCRATCH

By D. L. Julian

(With emendations by Gordon Mercer)

There are three things that people generally desire in the recreation of recorded music: (1) good reproduction, (2) minimum record wear, and (3) maximum convenience. Although the first two can go hand in hand, convenience unfortunately may be achieved at the sacrifice of fidelity and low record wear. This fact should be squarely faced. Naturally, an evasion of the routine of changing needles will be welcomed with open arms. But what price convenience? The changer mechanism does cause record wear, to an extent that varies with different changers. And permanent needles of poor design and inferior material, even good ones if used too long, cause considerable wear and distortion.

The permanent needle has been devised for two purposes: (1) to suit convenience, and (2) to eliminate scratch. Built-in jewel points in light-weight pickups are usually made with these two ideas in mind. It used to be the theory that the needle should match the groove shape exactly, and that the needle should have the ability to shape itself, successively to different grooves. But this theory is no longer widely held.

The reason for the adoption of broader points on needles in modern times has been to effect a compromise between distortion and scratch. There is *actually little* distortion in recording. By distortion, we really mean something foreign to the original—in other words an alien element that has been added. And the added elements are most of all to be traced to your machine—either to the needle, to the pickup, to the amplifier, or to the speaker. But since the needle is the first offender, and more often than not the worst, it is the needle that we shall consider here.

Engineers are in general agreement that it is entirely possible to cut a groove that is an accurate representation of the sound being recorded, but which cannot be followed by a needle of practical design. In *fortissimo* passages the shape of the grooves varies considerably and often presents problems that needles cannot meet without causing some distortion. This distortion, it is well to bear in mind, is not in the recording. As the recording moves inward and the *fortissimo* passages are crowded into smaller spaces, the needle finds it more and more difficult to effect a

perfect tracking.

To the best of our knowledge the standard cutter still in general use employs the needle with a point radius of .0023 inches that Western Electric developed many years ago. The tendency today is toward wider points, representing a compromise upon which no two authorities agree. The original theory was that a point radius of .002 shaped itself to an .0023 groove. However, by the end of the record face the needle was no longer any good, and the realization of this fact was the reason for using one steel needle to a single side. These facts doubtless served as the impetus for the development of semi-permanents. Most steel needles of today have points between .0025 to .0035 inches. Almost all of the jewel points vary from approximately .003 to as wide as .0045. When we consider that the standard practice is to cut the original record with a needle of lesser dimension, we begin to wonder about the advisability of playing back with a wider point radius. Contrary to a widespread belief, however, the wider point, unless it is itself damaged or worn, does not always wear the record groove. The weight of the pickup is a determining factor in the lifetime of the needle. The old pickups were extremely heavy; those of today are considerably lighter.

The Thinner Point

Although it still remains a fact that a very thin needle — one, say, with a point radius of .0015 or .002 inches — gives finer and clear reproduction, it should be noted that such fine-pointed needles wear quickly and damage the record. Only the lightest pickups could safely employ these, and such pickups would have to be constructed in a way that assured perfect grooves in loud passages. No cheap pickup could do this. If needles of such a fine point are employed it is necessary to change them after each record face. A jewel point made this fine would wear the record excessively if used in the ordinary pickup. One shadowgraph needle made for professionals formerly had a point radius of .002, but all users of it

knew that it was good for only one record face.

Another reason why the fine radius is not acceptable is that it produces a high scratch level. Scratch originates mostly in the bottom of the groove. The stamper, from which the record is made, is a reversal of the record, and what are the bottoms of the grooves of the record are the ridges of the stamper. These are subject to wear, because they are structurally the weakest part of the record. As the ridges of the stamper (or eventual bottoms of the grooves) wear, this causes an unevenness in the character or shape of the bottom of the grooves. This cannot be entirely avoided. The dough is placed in a wad in the center of the steam press and flows radially outward and is shaped by the two stampers, one on top and one on bottom. Since the bulk of the dough is in the center a greater wear and strain takes place there; this naturally affects the inner grooves of the stamper where they are structurally the weakest. Hence, we usually find that scratch and resultant distortion are more apparent from the middle grooves inward. Sometimes, by playing a new record with a chromium needle the bottoms of the grooves are smoothed out. We may find that the chromium removes particles of dust and grit and after a time we may find that the recording reproduces better because the bottom of the grooves are more uniform. Not infrequently, the scratch element is diminished. In some recordings, like those employing laminated surfaces, the chromium treatment does help because it eliminates any loose material accumulated at the bottom of the grooves. Although the laminated shell or surface is a unit in itself, made to the desired size before the dough is placed between, and is of a harder substance than the dough, it nevertheless is affected by imperfections in the groove bottoms as the stamper edges wear. Though it does not have the same scratch level of the regular dough record, it may still have an accumulation of fine grit at the bottom of the grooves. Where wear has taken place in the stamper edges the pressure is not going to be as solid as where the stamper edges are regular and more uniform;

hence, some material in the bottom of the groove may be easily cut out by the needle that penetrates the most deeply.

Although the general trend seems to be toward designing lightweight pickups with built-in broad-pointed needles to eliminate scratch, some people regard scratch as less objectionable than distortion. And a great deal of distortion in recording can be traced to these built-in points and to semi-permanent needles. Some machine manufacturers make a compromise in reproduction by cutting off the "highs" to eliminate the most offensive distortion, which lies in the higher frequencies. A great many, one would be inclined to say most, semi-permanent needles act as filters for this same reason.

On Record Wear and Scratch

Three things affect record wear and scratch: The degree of filtering or elimination of "highs" in the shank; the radius of the point; and the degree of polish. High polish on a needle, it is well to remember, is one of the chief determining factors of minimum record wear and minimum scratch.

Even though pickups and needles have been improved radically over a period of years, the recording cutters have always produced better reproduction than the pickup or needle can handle. This is no less true now than in 1925. So don't be inclined to lay the blame for bad reproduction at the door of the manufacturer; the trouble may well be right in your own yard. This is not by way of saying that distortion does not exist in recording, but that it is the exception rather than the rule. Incorrect placement of an instrumental or singer in relation to the microphone may result in acoustic blasts, which are a form of distortion, but this seldom happens. Poor monitoring, or altered dynamics, has nothing to do with distortion; it is simply an indication of artistic insensitivity on the part of the recording engineer. The reason why we do not have *pianissimos* in recording comparable to those heard in the concert hall is that the scratch level of the record must never be allowed to drown out the music.

All of this by way of preamble. In all the writing that has been done about the

function of the needle an underlying principle remains unaltered. For optimum realism, a *metal* — or equally hard or even harder — needle is essential. Indeed, for all-round best results the needle should be metal or a very fine jewel. *Beware of cheap jewel needles or cheap "precious" metal points.* Only barbarians, to our way of thinking, use thorns or fibres. That they deny themselves the technical progress of 15 years by throwing out of the window the higher frequencies, or brilliance, of the recording, which is the living essence of the music, does not seem to concern them. The case against thorns by now is so complete that there seems no need to "shake the tree" at this time, but some facts are well repeated and recent experiments with thorns have supplied new and vital data. Contrary to accepted notions, thorn needles wear records badly. The mere fact that they are incapable of the utter devastation that can be caused by the machine-gun action of the badly worn permanent metallic or jeweled point does *not* give them a clean bill of health. Usually the thorn needle breaks down completely before irreparable damage takes place. A thorn has a very coarse molecular structure; it cannot retain a "point" through a single record face. Believe it or not, it adds surface noise very rapidly, as it never can present a truly smooth surface to the groove.

Let us repeat: *High polish determines minimum record wear.* Experts and sound engineers buy only the best needles — those with the highest polish. If they use steel, they demand and pay for shadow-graph needles in order to assure uniform goodness.

The Damage of the Thorn

The damage that thorns do to records is far more insidious than most people know. On the basis of results of two years of experiment by experts, we are told that thorn needles used in changers wear excessively, since they not only generate more heat than steel needles but *hold that heat longer*. Hence, they literally *burn off* the finer frequencies in the side walls of the records. One California university has made extensive tests of needles, but to date its findings have not been made

known to the general public. However, these findings are known to sound engineers, and they corroborate the facts about thorns generating and holding heat.

To return to metal needles: the curse of the present record situation has been the cheap "permanent" needle and the built-in point. Advertising with its clever but commercial sophistry has dimmed the issue. Fabulous claims are made for the life of permanent needles. Now certified tests may show that a needle will play 5,000 times, but this in itself does not mean much. Usually, the "certified" tests behind the advertisement are simplicity itself. A 10-inch disc of, for example, Brahms' *Lullaby* (with a recording level just slightly above scratch noise), having a playing time under two minutes, is put on the turntable. It should be remembered that we are interested in playing time expressed in terms of *hours*, not in a vague number of "record sides" as the tests are usually conducted under controlled conditions, on selected "good risk" records, the findings have little relation to everyday conditions. The action of a needle on the *same* record groovers cannot pretend to duplicate the variety of cross-sections encountered in an evening's record session in the home; nor does a low-level recording impose the travail of a full symphony orchestra in *fortissimo* passages. Again, the pickup for the "test" will be specially designed for the least possible stiffness, inertia and pressure. All of which, from the needle manufacturer's standpoint, is justifiable. It provides him with a bona fide claim.

Replacement Advantages

The interchangeable or removable permanent needle has its advantage over the built-in point. It is possible by watching its wear to remove it before damage is done, but not so with the built-in point. There are built-in points which operate efficiently and satisfactorily up to a given point, but we have found that after 300 playings they should be examined for wear. One or two light-weight pickups with built-in points, with which we have experimented, definitely showed wear after 300 playings. Considered in relation to 12-inch record sides, this gave them a playing life of 20 hours. Yet considerably

longer life was claimed for these points by the manufacturers of the pickup.

On the average, I know of no permanent (replaceable) needle that can be safely used for as much as 40 hours (600 4-minute record sides) without wear. The efficacy of needles of the same type varies, however, and the operation of needles may be vastly different on different machines. If your taste runs to the symphonies of Tchaikovsky, Sibelius, Beethoven and Shostakovich, you will find the time lower—probably around 30 hours; while if you are addicted to chamber music and lieder, you may be satisfied to use the needle for a longer period of time. Actually, loud and brilliant recordings require the most perfect point for good reproduction. Hence, with this type of recording you notice wear more quickly than with more subdued reproduction. Remember, 40 hours may represent much less than a month's playing in your case, rather than a "lifetime." It is most important for the user of permanent needles to examine points through a magnifier at regular intervals. The infallible sign of a defective needle is the increase of scratch. If you do not have a microscope a simple test can be made by running the needle over your thumb nail twirling it in a variety of positions. If the needle tends to scratch or mar the nail at any point (it must be tested by consistent turning), then it is worn.

No Set Rules

No generalization can answer adequately the question of proper needle-dimension or describe the ideal needle for everyone. Often, a particular length and thickness are an integral consideration in the design of certain pickups; and consequently a needle that performs flawlessly in one pickup may be a bitter disappointment in another. For this reason, *no categorical recommendation can be made*. Again, the same needle may not prove satisfactory for all types and periods of recordings. What proves right in an old acoustic record, or one dating from circa 1930, may not be satisfactory in a record of 1937 or 1945. What proves desirable in a chamber music or lieder recording may not suffice in an orchestral or brilliant piano

recording and *vice versa*. A few fundamental principles should be kept in mind. A low signal output is desirable. Actually, loud and brilliant recordings require the most perfect needle for good reproduction. Hence, with this type of recording you will notice wear sooner, as we have already stated, than with more subdued reproduction. It is for this reason that harmonic distortion so often follows in the wake of loudness.

Alignment

Correct alignment of the pickup is important if one is using the interchangeable needles. The RCA Magic Cell pickup, which has a needle constructed so that it rides in the grooves in such a way that alignment is no longer essential, is the exception rather than the rule. This pickup, which has a built-in point, incidentally, showed marked needle wear on tests after 300 playings. It sounded exceptionally well, however, until the needle wore, and is one of the best crystal pickups in our estimation, ever made. Since the perfect alignment, or near-perfect, cannot be satisfactorily obtained with a short tone arm, a compromise in alignment is usually resorted to. Professionals use tone arms that are 18 inches and sometimes more in length. Since the greatest part of the record wear takes place from the middle to the final grooves of the record, it is best to get the nearest approach to perfect alignment in this area.

It has been held that the straight needle is best, but needles of the "knee" type have proved highly satisfactory to many people. But a cheap needle of this type may cause hopeless catastrophes, for many of them have been known to break at the knee. Cheap sapphires have done this. The latter needle also is known to chip unexpectedly. One may not be aware of the fact such a needle has chipped until one finds that some valued recording has been literally chewed up in the playing. Users of sapphire needles should be warned that a slight drop of the pickup might cause a chip or lesion in the jewel point. It can happen in a faulty action of a changer. Sometimes children handle a pickup carelessly or an ever diligent housewife can inadvertently do this dam-

age. Sapphires occasionally chip under normal playing conditions even without abuse. Constant examination of jewel points, except the diamond, is advised.

Two semi-permanents of the "knee" type which have been highly recommended to us by several sound engineers after a series of tests made with a half-dozen or more needles of the so-called permanent type, are the Duotone "Star Sapphire" and the Permo "Fidelitone Master." Subsequent tests made by our own staff bear out the findings given us by these engineers. Both of these needles have filtering characteristics and both require more juice, or a higher volume level, to get tonal results similar to those given by a regular steel needle. It will be observed that the "Fidelitone Master" has a highly polished surface, which assures minimum record wear while its point is unworn. Too, this needle has an indentation on the upper shank which insures correct placement in the pickup and allows for safe removal of the needle. Examination of the "Star Sapphire" reveals a jewel point that is finer and better polished than any needle of its type on the market; furthermore the tip or playing point is ground to a finer dimension than any other jewel needle. The point radius has been made at different widths—.003 and .0025 inches—but a more recent decision on point width has changed this to .0028, which is considered by many to be the most satisfactory width. The point radius of the "Fidelitone Master" is said to be .003.

Opinion of an expert

One leading engineer in the East, who is claimed by most experts in the field to know more about the needle than any other authority (the way they put it is that he has forgotten more about needles than most so-called experts know), states that the ideal point is .003 inches. Most permanents, particularly cheap jewel points, have a wider radius than this.

Which of the above needles will function best in your pickup is something for you to ascertain for yourself. Quality of reproduction plays an important part in this and the taste of the individual is the determining factor. Remember that if the

permanent type of needle does not own some filtering characteristics it will have a high scratch level. However, the clarity and over-all brilliance of the above needles have proved eminently satisfactory to our examiners; indeed, because of the intensification of "highs" in modern American recordings, these needles are deemed best for all around satisfactory results.

Our own use of the ephemeral type of needle requires no justification. We do not use a changer, and we suffer the constant inconvenience of changing the needle after each record side if necessary. Both automatic changers and automatic stops increase record wear, especially near the center and inner grooves of the recording where it can be least tolerated. This happens because a spring pressure is brought into play to release the mechanism at the desired point. We are not suggesting that you discard your changer (you probably would not do it anyway); but remember your changer is not an un-mixed blessing.

The Needle For You

We shall now try to decide which needle of the interchangeable type will fit *your* personal requirements, but do not be annoyed if we fail to realize your needs. Remember, *the operation of a particular needle may be vastly different on different machines.*

To begin with, if you stick to your guns, and think that convenience is the pearl of great price—then, by all means, go ahead and use a permanent. No cheap jewel or inexpensive "precious" metal is worth acquiring. Remember, the former needle *must* be handled with care. If your changer jams, do not expect to have a perfect jewel any more; it does not wear like mother's engagement ring. The ideal jewel is the diamond point, but unfortunately it is not obtainable and furthermore it is two to three times as expensive as the best sapphire point. But since it wears ten times as long and even longer, it can be noted that this type of needle would be eminently worthwhile. Edison knew this as far back as a half-century ago.

Those who relegate music to the "background" for dinner or cards (with the tone

control turned to cut off all brilliance) will find the permanent needle the best way out.

If you have a changer, we would be batting our head against a brick wall were we to propose that you change your needle during the playing of a set. The most logical compromise, if you do not know how to check accurately on the wear of a needle point, or if your memory is apt to fail on the length of time the point has been employed, is the chromium needle. This, of course, presupposes that you are interested in attaining both good reproduction and low record wear. However, if you have a heavy pickup you *must* expect some record wear. Be sure to replace the needle as often as possible; the best procedure is to use the chromium a minimum number of times—our advisers state that 12 times is a satisfactory minimum. It is well to know that chromium needles over a period of time may tend to increase the intensity of "surface noise"—unless yours is a very fine pickup. Curiously, chromiums can do the opposite. Sometimes, when there is fuzziness in a new recording, several playings with a chromium will clear out the grooves.

Even chromiums are not satisfactory with certain types of grooves. If you have trouble with certain recordings and are sufficiently persevering to try out several needles until you find the one that gives the best results, you might make a note on the margin of the album or the record envelope for future reference. Remember, the needle that satisfactorily reproduces recordings of the 1930 or 1935 vintage may not reproduce those of a later day as well. The needle that gives satisfaction with vocal and chamber music recordings may not do so with orchestral recordings.

Now, if you do not have a changer, and the arrangement of your pickup is such that replacing a needle is a major operation involving both great gymnastic contortion and eye strain (which is an all too common characteristic of many instruments), you have no choice but to use chromiums or a semi-permanent needle of the type you find most satisfactory.

—(Continued on page 235)

The American Record Guide



SOME TELEFUNKEN RELEASES

By Leo Goldstein

Many correspondents have asked for news on recordings in Germany during the war years. That diligent phonophile, Pvt. Leo Goldstein, has been able to ferret out some information for us, and our thanks and those of our readers go to him for his efforts. Pvt. Goldstein sent us much more material than we could possibly use. Recordings of standard items by popular composers like Leoncavallo, Puccini, Massenet, Verdi, and others—sung in German—have been omitted, as many items by German composers that are duplications of what is already available better performed in American catalogues. As a matter of fact, even a hasty examination of the lists published below reveals very little of importance that is not available, probably in better or as good performances, in this country. One suspects that many recordings made by international artists before the war were ordered

replaced by the Nazis in performances by artists they sanctioned. This does not imply that the artistic quality of much of the material listed is not worthy of consideration. How much of it will survive the war is problematical. The recordings of out-and-out reported collaborationists like Wilhelm Mengelberg may be excised from the catalogues. Again, the music world may decide that a man's artistry has nothing to do with his political leanings.—Ed.



It was my good fortune to meet the former resident representative for Telefunken in the Naples area. During the course of my visit with him, I was allowed to rummage through his catalogue of supplements and get an idea of the many recordings issued in Italy, and in part in Germany, during the war

years. The hand of the German music director is to be noted in cases where German musicians are to be found appearing as guests with the orchestras of conquered nations and where outstanding musical figures of the conquered nations are brought to Germany to conduct leading orchestras.

First, I shall mention a few items from the Italian Telefunken catalogue, omitted from the list that appeared in the December 1943 issue of this magazine, and then I shall go on to give the recordings either by catalogue listing or whenever possible by supplement date.

(Up to and including April 1, 1941)

BACH: *Brandenburg Concerto No. 4*; Hamburg Phil. Chamber Orch., dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt. Soloists: Rudolf Prick (violin); Hans Brinkman and Louis Knoebber (flutes) (discs E-2956/57).

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3 (Eroica)*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg (discs SK-3117/22).

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 2*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg (discs SK-3075/79).

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 3*; Hamburg Orch., dir. Eugen Jochum (discs SK-3024/27).

FRANCAIX: *Serenade for 12 Instruments*; Hamburg Phil. Orch., dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt (discs A-10037/38).

FRANCK: *Symphony in D minor*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg (discs SK-3145/49).

GRIEG: *Concerto in A minor, Op. 16*; Ivar Johnsen (piano) and Berlin State Opera Orch., dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt (discs E-3132/35).

MOZART: *Symphony in E flat, 543*; German Philharmonic Orch. (Prague), dir. Joseph Keilberth (discs E-3105/07). (Since Czech Phil. Orch. is said to have been dispersed at the beginning of the war and most of its members fled to England, this must be a new orchestra formed by the Germans.)

SCHMIDT: *Notre Dame—Zwischenspiel*; Berlin Phil. Orch. dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt (disc E-2908). (This is the correct

reverse face of Sibelius *Valse triste*, not Jarnefelt's *Berceuse* as listed in the *G. S. Encyclopedia*, 1942.)

SUPPÉ: *Boccaccio-Overture*; Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt (disc A-2403).

SCHUBERT: *Rosamunde — Overture*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg (disc SK-3008).

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Overture 1812*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg (disc SK 3080).

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor*; Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Mengelberg (discs SK-3086/91).

TELEMANN: *Trio in E minor from Tafelmusik 1733*; Wiesbaden Musical College Group, dir. E. Weyns (disc E-2256).

WAGNER (Siegfried): *Der Schmied von Marienburg—Overture*; Bayreuth Festival Orch., dir. Heinz Tietjen (discs SK-2110/11-S).

WAGNER: *Fliegende Holländer — Die Frist ist um*; George Oegg (Stadtische Wiener Volkoper), German Opera Orch. (Berlin), dir. Walter Lutze (disc E-3129).

WEBER: *Euryanthe Overture and Abu Hassan Overture*; German Opera Orch. (Berlin), dir. Eugen Jochum (2 discs).

(November 1941 to June 1942)

ADAM: *Variations on a Theme by Mozart*; and CZERNIK: *Chi sa* (Tarantella); Erna Sack (soprano); German State Opera Orch., dir. Wilhelm Czernik (disc E-3063).

ALABIEFF: *Die Nachtigall*; and DEN. ZA: *Funiculi, Funicula*; Erna Sack (soprano), German Opera Orch., dir. Kurt R. Schroeder (disc A-2900).

BACH: *Singet dem Herrn* (Motet); Die Kantorei der Staatlichen Hochschule fuer Musik, Berlin, dir. Prof. Kurt Thomas (discs E-2958/59).

BACH: *Musical Offering — Canon a 2* (Ascendente modulatione ascendat Gloria Regis), *Canon perpetuus*, *Canon a 2* (per Augmentationem contrario Motu); Wiesbaden Musical College, dir. Edmund Weyns (disc E-3082).

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto No. 5 (Emperor)*; Conrad Hansen (piano), German Opera House Orch., dir. Eugen Jochum (discs SK-3203/07).

BORODIN: *On the Steppes of Central Asia*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg (disc SK-3198).

BRUCH: *Concerto No. 1 in G minor*; George Kulenkampff (violin), Berlin Phil. Orchest., dir. Henk Bruns (discs SK-3172/74).

FLOTOW: *Alessandro Stradella — Overture*; German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutze (disc E-3060).

FLOTOW: *Martba—Ach, so fromm*; and NICOLAI: *Lustigen Weiber von Windsor—Horch, die Lerche*; Peter Anders (tenor), German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutze (disc A-2466).

FLOTOW: *Martba — Porterlied*; and NICOLAI: *Lustigen Weiber—Als bueblein kleins*; Wilhelm Schirp (bass), German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutze (disc A-10001).

HASSLER: *Ach weh des leiden*; SCHEIN: *Wenn Philli ihre Liebesstrahl*; MYLUS: *Ein Maegdlein*; DOWLAND: *Suesse Lieb*; Die Kantorei der Staatlichen Hochschule fuer Musik, Berlin. dir. Prof. Kurt Thomas (disc E-2926).

HAYDN: *Concerto in D major*; Gaspar Cassado (cello), Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt (discs SK-3222/24).

KUNNEKE: *Taenzerische Suite, Op. 26* (Concerto Grosso in 5 movements for Jazz band and Orch.)—*Overture* (Fox-trot tempo) (disc E-2490); *Blues* (disc A-2491); *Intermezzo* (disc E-2492—reverse face); *Glueckliche Reise—Overture*—*Concert Rhumba*; *Valse Boston* (A-2493); *Finale* (Fox-trot) (E-2494); Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Eduard Kunneke.

MOZART: *Symphony in D major* (Prague); German Phil. Orch., Prague, dir. Josef Keilberth (discs E-3208/10).

MOZART: *Warnung K. 433*; and SCHUBERT: *Die Forelle*; Erna Sack (soprano) with Wilhelm Czernik at the piano (disc A-10426).

MOZART: *Don Giovanni — Overture*; Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt (disc E-3072).

MOZART: *Don Giovanni — Nur ihren Frieden (Dalla sua pace)*; and *Zauber-*

floete—Dies Bildniss; Anton Dermota (tenor—Vienna State Opera), Vienna Phil. Orch., dir. Rudolf Moralt (disc E-3162).

MOZART: *Zauberfloete — In diesen heiligen Hallen, and O Isis und Osiris*; Wilhelm Schirp (bass), German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutze (disc E-3049).

RIES: *La Capricciosa*; Georg Kulenkampff (violin), Michael Raucheisen (piano) (disc A-2552).

ROENTGEN: *Alt Niederlaendische Taenze, Op. 46*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg (disc SK-3157).

STRAUSS: *Till Eulenspiegel*; Vienna Phil. Orch., dir. Clemens Krauss (discs SK-3139/40).

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Eugen Onegin — Ein jeder kennt die Lieb auf Erden*; and VERDI: *Sicilian Vespers — Du, mein Palermi*; Wilhelm Schirp (bass), German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutze (disc E-2928).

VERDI: *Traviata—Arie der Violetta*; Erna Berger (soprano), Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt (disc SK-3101).

WAGNER: *Fliegender Hollaender — Willst jenes Tages, and Durch Gewitter und Sturm*; Peter Anders (tenor), German Opera House Orch., dir. A. Gruber (disc E-3056).

WAGNER: *Fliegender Hollaender—Arie des Daland, Mogst du mein Kind*; and LORTZING: *Der Waffenschmied — Auch ich war ein Juengling*; Wilhelm Schirp (bass), German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutze (disc E-3130).

WAGNER: *Lobengrin—Einsam in truenben Tagen, and Euch Luftten, die mein Klagen*; Maria Reining (soprano), German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutze (disc E-3052).

WAGNER: *Goetterdaemmerung — Siegfrieds Rheinfahrt* (Humperdinck arr.); Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt (disc E-2685).

ZELLER: *Der Obersteiger — Eei nicht boes*; and *Der Vogelhandler — Wie mein Abn'l zwanzig jar*; Hans Schmitt-Walter (baritone), German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutze (disc A-10012).

The following lists all bear specific dates during 1943, and take us up to August of that year. The record situation in Germany remains obscure, but Telefunken discs—made in Germany—were issued as late as August 1, 1943 through Durium S. A. in Milan, the Italian distributors. Of interest are new recordings by Furtwaengler, Mariano Stabile, and Mengelberg—the latter performing Strauss' famous autobiographical tone-poem, *A Hero's Life*, which Strauss dedicated to the noted Dutchman and his orchestra. Stabile, the Italian baritone, is one of Italy's greatest singing actors, and despite his advancing age is still regarded as the finest interpreter of Falstaff.

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 7 in E major—Adagio*; Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Wilhelm Furtwaengler (discs SK-3230/32).

SCHUMANN: *Concerto in A minor, Op. 54*; Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli (piano), with La Scala Orch., dir. Antonio Pedrotti (discs SKB-3260/63). (This is the first recording on Telefunken of this former La Voce del Padrone artist, who is Italy's leading pianist since the capitulation of Carlo Zecchi, of whom I have previously spoken. This recording by Telefunken of Italian artists is part of a new policy, undoubtedly sanctioned by Germany, for this record concern to honor Italian talent. How far the war allowed them to pursue this policy may be seen by this and following records recognizable by the prefix SKB.)

SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 4*; German Phil. Orch., Prague, dir. Joseph Keilberth (discs E-3255/57).

VERDI: *Falstaff—L'onore! Ladri! and Ehi taverniere*; Mariano Stabile, La Scala Orch., dir. Alberto Erede (discs SKB-3277).

VERDI: *Falstaff—Duet Act II (Falstaff and Ford)*; Mariano Stabile and Afro Poli, La Scala Orch., dir. Alberto Erede (disc SKB-3278).

VERDI: *Falstaff—Duet Act II (Falstaff and Quickly)*; Mariano Stabile and Palombini (mezzo soprano), La Scala Orch., dir. Alberto Erede (disc SKB-3279).

BACH (arr. Schemell): *Musical Offering—Ricercare* (disc E-2996). BACH: (arr. Schemell): *Fantasia and Fugue in C minor* (disc E-3064). Wiesbaden Musical College Orch., dir. E. Weyns.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in F major, Op. 24 (Spring)*; Georg Kulenkampff (violin) and Siegfried Schultze (piano) (discs E-3124/26).

DOPPER: *Gothic Chaconne*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg (discs SK-3155/57).

DVORAK: *Slavonic Dances Nos. 3 and 7*; German Sym. Orch., Prague, dir. O. Jeremias (disc E-3100).

FLOTOW: *Indra Overture*; German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutz (disc E-3048).

HAYDN: *Symphony in D major (Clock)*; German Phil. Orch., Prague, dir. Joseph Keilberth (discs E-3233/35).

LIADOW: *The Enchanted Lake*; Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt (disc E-3059).

LORTZING: *Undine—Ballet Music*; German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutz (disc E-3097).

ROSSINI: *L'Assedio di Corinto—Overture* (3 parts), and *William Tell—Ballet Music*; La Scala Orchestra, dir. Gino Marinuzzi (discs SKB-3219/20).

ROSSINI: *La Gazza Ladra—Overture*; La Scala Orch., dir. Marinuzzi (disc SKB-3216).

SIBELIUS: *Finlandia*; Goeteborg Sym. Orch., dir. S. Eckerberg (disc E-3186).

STRAUSS, Joh.: *Roses of the South*; Vienna Phil. Orch., dir. Clemens Krauss (disc SK-3187).

STRAUSS, Joh.: *Waldmeister Overture*; German Opera House Orch., dir. W. Lutz (disc E-3040).

STRAUSS, R.: *Heldenleben, Op. 40*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg (discs SK-3181/85).

VERDI: *La Forza del Destino—La Vergine degli angeli*; Maria Wulf (soprano), Orchestra and Chorus of the Hamburg State Opera, dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt (disc E-3042).

WAGNER: *Goetterdaemmerung—Funeral Music*; German Opera House Orch., dir. Eugen Jochum (disc E-3128).

—(Continued on page 232)



FIFTY GREAT VOCAL RECORDS

A MISSING NUMBER

By Stephen Fassett

A thorough inspection of the list of fifty records which I supposedly completed in the March 1945 issue will show that record number 41 is missing. So acute is my chagrin that, wasting neither time nor space on futile explanations and with profound apologies to all concerned, I shall plug the gap without further ado. The missing link was a tenor. As one reader remarked in a friendly note asking about this record — wouldn't you know it had to be tenor. But the acknowledged eccentricities of the tenor hardly excuse my own negligence to send the copy originally prepared to the editor, and—as the editor says—his failure to note the omission.

41. GEORGE HAMLIN — *Im Kabne (Grieg)*, sung in German. Victor 64248. Recorded around 1912.

▲ George Hamlin possessed a lyric tenor of exceptional charm and his understanding of the art of song interpretation is persuasively revealed in his expressive rendition of this Grieg song. At the time that he made this record, he wanted to do a series of German lieder but the recorders were unwilling to al-

low him this privilege. Instead they made him compromise on some songs in English which were not of enduring worth. Perhaps because it has sentimental appeal, he was allowed to record Jensen's setting of *Lebn' deine Wang' an meine Wang'* (Victor 64296), but although this is as well sung as the Grieg I cannot recommend it. It is not a good lieder. Two other recordings, both operatic, of Hamlin's deserve mention: his fine singing of Siegmund's *Liebeslied* (Victor disc 74111—1908) and his gracious treatment of Haydn's aria, *In Native Worth*, from *The Creation* (Victor discs 74250—1911).

Hamlin was born in Elgin, Illinois, on September 20, 1869, and died in New York on January 20, 1923. As a boy he played the cornet in his Sunday School orchestra. After emerging from a normal middle-class childhood, he married in 1892 and shortly thereafter embarked upon the career of a professional singer. He received his vocal training from various American and European teachers, under none of whom, it is said, he ever worked long. He early won a reputation in oratorio, which was considerably enhanced in 1896, when he sang in a per-

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formance of Verdi's *Requiem* by the New York Oratorio Society, under the direction of Walter Damrosch, with Lillian Nordica and David Bispham as associates. Although the tenor appeared often in opera (notably with the Chicago-Philadelphia Opera Company—where he created more than one role), it was as a concert artist that he achieved his greatest success. As early as 1897, a period when singers customarily had assisting artists on their programs, this tenor was already giving one-man concerts. When Victor issued his first records in 1908, it could honestly state that "Mr. Hamlin stands today as one of the leading concert and lieder singers." He was an early champion of Hugo Wolf and Richard Strauss; on many occasions he gave recitals devoted entirely to their songs. From 1908 to 1916, Hamlin made a series of records for Victor, many of which are worth owning. But none perhaps preserves the memory of Hamlin, the expressive singer of lieder, as well as his recording of Grieg's *Im Kabne*. In 1909 and 1910, he made recordings of the *Cavatina* from *Faust*, sung in English (disc 74139), and of Rudolfo's *Narrative* from *Bohème* (disc 74185), but whether for better or worse these recordings are forgotten today.

* * *

Before ending these notes completely, I should like to extend my thanks to Robert Enequist and Douglas Parsonage of New York, both of whom in letters expressing approval of most of my selections, deplored my choice of a Ponselle record (number 14 in the list).

These readers feel that the Victor *Africana* aria is a dull affair compared with the singer's *D'amor sul ali rosee* from *Il Trovatore* (Columbia 49559 or 68058-D), and, although I still maintain that the *Africana* aria is sung beautifully, I have to admit they are from their standpoint unquestionably right. Not only is the Columbia disc a magnificent reproduction of Ponselle's limitless voice (far superior in this respect to many of her later electrical recordings), but it is also a thrilling rendition of a great aria. It cannot be recommended too highly.

EDITORIAL NOTES

(Continued from page 218)

and switched it off. *Peer Gynt*, also broadcast, I found easier to 'take-in' and somewhat more interesting, but I was not very enthusiastic about it either. But I must admit I am not qualified to criticize music in general, let alone modern compositions.

"Before ending this chapter, I wish to say that, contrary to belief of many friends living outside of Europe, there was no German ban on Chopin. As a matter of fact, the Germans seemed to appreciate him very much; so much indeed that they went as far as to remove the piano that had belonged to Chopin — together with other artistic treasures — from the home of Mme. Landowska at St. Leu-la-forêt — and sent it to Germany.

"Concerning Cortot, I do not believe his case to have been really serious, since the legal action against him has been dropped. He has nevertheless been prohibited from playing in public for one year by the Comité National d'Epuración du Spectacle. I do not think that Cortot ever took any direct political action or expressed in public pro-German opinions. However, he ought to have known better than to have accepted engagements to perform with visiting German orchestras or to have gone on concert tours throughout Germany. I hear he keeps busy writing a book on Bach's music. Let me add that Cortot is another artist to whom age has not been too kind. This is about all I can tell you at the moment."

TELEFUNKEN RELEASES

(Continued from page 228)

WAGNER: *Lohengrin—Prelude*; German Opera House Orch., dir. Eugen Jochum (disc E-3175).

WEBER: *Oberon Overture*; German Opera House Orch., dir. Eugen Jochum (disc E-3142).

WOLF-REGER: *Italian Serenade*; German Phil. Orch., Prague, dir. Joseph Keilbreth (disc E-3158).

BOOK REVIEWS

SIR DONALD FRANCIS TOVEY:

Essays in Musical Analysis: Volume VII Chamber Music; and Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Edited by Hubert J. Foss. Oxford University Press, 1944; \$4.00 each.

▲ It is gratifying to receive these books, printed in England but issued in this country, for war-time difficulties might well restrict the publication of such a specialized book. Yet within a few weeks we have seen published, not only these two Tovey volumes, but also Willi Apel's fine *Harvard Dictionary* and, more recently, Einstein's new book on Mozart; any of these four publications would make a music publishing season a notable one.

The Tovey volumes are similar, but not identical, in format to the previous *Essays in Musical Analysis*; in content and style they are of a piece with Tovey's other writing. Fragmentary by nature, they are redeemed by the invariable presence of an intelligent, encyclopedic, and sensitive musical mind and heart. Like all that Tovey has written, they are suffused with his keen wit, vast erudition, and amazing sensitivity to the type of technical detail in music that is expressively significant.

It is quite fitting that Tovey should have been in charge of the musical articles in the eleventh and fourteenth editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: his feats of memory were prodigious. He is said to have been able to sing almost any of the Schubert *Lieder* from memory, accompanying himself at the piano. Mr. Huberman recently told this writer that Tovey undoubtedly had the greatest musical memory he had encountered: Tovey, according to him, knew not only the scores of most of the musical literature, but the individual parts as well.

Unfortunately only fragmentary remnants of this vast musical knowledge have been left to us. Reputed an excellent pianist, Tovey left but one record, and that an ancient and rare one. Though he was a systematic pedagogue of uncommon influence, he never completed the various textbooks he hoped to write. Even his forthcoming volume on Beethoven is reported to be a very truncated fragment of what might have been a critical masterpiece. Yet the very occasional nature of Tovey's writing precludes the raising of the vaster general issues which trap so many critics into cosmic sententiousness. Tovey, usually writing under pressure for a special occasion, hewed a line close to the music under discussion. His generalizations are enunciated, time and time again, but always in the direct context of the music. Fragmentary though his writing is, it has behind it a general musical philosophy that is implicit in much that he wrote, but never explicitly enunciated in any treatise.

In the articles from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on *Music*, Tovey defines the range in which his musical thoughts move. Historically he is bounded by the 14th and 20th centuries: music earlier than the pregnant stirrings of harmony and counterpoint is "beyond our power of appreciation except in the light of prehistorical origins"; and the twentieth century is the era in which Richard Strauss "presents an almost solitary example of mastery of movement," and Hindemith, Debussy, Schönberg, and Stravinsky are mentioned only for specialized interests. Music is for Tovey exclusively an art-form: it "stands in the unique position that its language had been wholly created by art." Some may call this a narrow view of music, but none can deny that Tovey has thoroughly cov-

ered the area which he so clearly bounds.

Tovey's approach to music is, therefore, as an art—a complex and seriously intentioned means of human expression involving the use of an aural language, whose historical growth is to Tovey one of the great human achievements. In his criticism, Tovey seeks to study and illumine this art by looking at it in terms of its language—a language that can be described in terms of harmony, counterpoint, rhythm, melody, and form. Thus, though Tovey has little use either for an historical approach or for interpreting music in the light of a composer's biography, his analyses inevitably lead to a clear definition of the various historical styles: his very method of analysing a Palestrina motet differs from that of a Beethoven symphony exactly in the degree that Palestrina's harmony, counterpoint, rhythm, melody and form differ from those of Beethoven. For this reason, his all too scarce essays on the music of the "Golden Age" of polyphony have a distinction that is not to be found in much of the historical commentary today, which deals with this music as if it were a rudimentary preliminary to the later styles of music.

But it is in the field of the so-called classical style that Tovey is most at home, and here we may find enunciated the central features of his outlook. Most notable, and a unique characteristic of Tovey's approach, is the manner in which he relates analysis in terms of harmony and form to a definition of dramatic style in music. Form is not, with Tovey, an abstract structure involving spatial symmetries, but it is a living succession of sounds and ideas, which are dealt with as such and not in terms more appropriate to architecture or painting, except by occasional and fruitful analogy. His formal analysis is not, as so much is inclined to be, a barren description, of possible value only to the writer himself; at its best it becomes an illumination of the greatness both of the music and of the mind that created it.

The *Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica* include some of the finest of Tovey's more general observations, and

may be viewed either as the portal to Tovey's critical edifice, or as summary capstone. The article on *Harmony*, for instance, is a classic of its kind, and may well be the finest concise exposition of the technic and esthetics of classical harmony. Though briefer in extent, the articles on *Rhythm*, *Counterpoint*, *Melody*, and *Instrumentation* are equally valuable as basic expositions of fundamental aspects of music. Those familiar with Tovey's individual *Essays* will not be surprised by the excellence of his treatment of such general matters as *Concerto*, *Contrapuntal Forms*, *Fugue*, *Sonata*, *Sonata Forms*, and *Variation*; here he summarizes many of the *dicta* of the individual *Essays* in concise but comprehensive form. It is to be regretted that only the general musical articles were from the *Encyclopaedia*; Tovey wrote some ten additional articles of a biographical nature, including a superb summary of Beethoven's life and music. Possibly these are being saved for another volume.

The seventh volume of *Essays in Musical Analysis* is devoted to music that Tovey generously includes under the heading of Chamber Music. The book is prefaced by his fine article on that topic from Cobbett's *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, a larger and more characteristic essay than that in the *Britannica*. Following this, some two-thirds of the volume are devoted to Essays on music for piano solo, the remainder on Chamber Music. But this is hardly to be censured, for we gain thereby some magnificent essays on Bach's *Clavierübung* and *Toccata in F sharp minor*, a Haydn *Sonata*, Chopin *Etudes*, and Brahms *Variations*. Possibly the finest Essay in the book, and one of Tovey's finest ever, is that on Bach's "*Goldberg*" *Variations*, a veritable masterpiece of analysis and commentary that matches the greatness of the music; smaller in scope, but exceptionally fine, is the Essay on Beethoven's "*Diabelli*" *Variations*. These two Essays, which should renew our regret that the superb Landowska and Schnabel records, respectively, of these two works are not generally available in this country, plus the Brahms *Essays* here, are admirable summation of Tovey's commentary upon the Variation as an art-form, and

should be read together with his article on that subject in the *Britannica*.

Several omissions in the *Chamber Music* volume surprised this writer. In addition to the general article on Chamber Music, Tovey contributed to Cobbett's *Survey* articles on Haydn and Brahms that are definitive concise surveys; that on Haydn in particular contains material on the development of the String Quartet that is not to be found in any other English-language study. I had hoped, too, that this volume might also have included Tovey's contribution to the Beethoven Issue in 1927 of *Music and Letters*; at that time, under the forbidding title of *Some Aspects of Beethoven's Art-Forms*, he gave not only a detailed and comparative analysis of Beethoven's *Sonata Opus 22* and the *Quartet Opus 131*, but parenthetically passed comment on such wide-ranging subjects as the formal structure of the *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde*, and the dramatic characteristics of the chamber music of Brahms.

Yet the disappointment over these omissions is allayed both by the wealth of material offered, and by the expectation that the Oxford University Press will continue to bring out more of the posthumous writings of one of the most extraordinary minds of our time (Lady Tovey and Mr. Foss are reported at work on a collection of Tovey's letters). For, much as we may regret the fragmentary character of what he did write, and the lack of what he did not write, we can treasure what he left us as a continually rewarding and stimulating body of musical commentary, in which a great mind ranges selectively and penetratingly over the field of our finest musical heritage. We are indebted to the loyal labors of Hubert J. Foss for his continu-

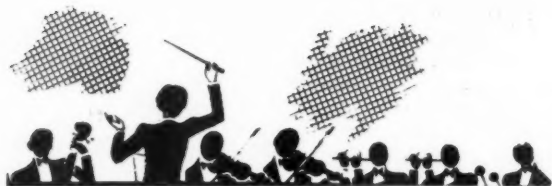
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NEEDLES, REPRODUCTION, ETC.

(Continued from page 224)

From our own standpoint, the old fashioned way of changing needles frequently has proved the best procedure for the best in reproductive fidelity and the least wear on records. Avoid the cheapest steel needles. Instead, select a "transcription" type (a good shadowgraph needle), such as those made by RCA Victor and Duotone. The Victor Red Seal needle (or its equivalent, the Columbia "Masterwork") has given us better tonal reproduction than any other interchangeable needle on the market. There are, of course, pickups that may not tolerate the Red Seal type too well, but it has been eminently satisfactory to us. We *never* use this needle for more than four sides. By following this procedure you will insure a long life for your records, with countless playings as well as fine tonal quality. In our estimation, the additional trouble incurred in the use of these needles is more than compensated for by the ends gained. The Victor Red Seal needle, in our estimation is a far better one today than its counterpart of foreign origin—Recoton. It has a much sharper point for one thing (its radius is approximately .003 inches), and for another a safer thickness, which prevents the needle from snapping or breaking while in use. Although it has some filtering characteristics, it reproduces "highs" more equitably on the whole than the Recoton needle. The latter filters more and also evidences bad "peaks" in loud passages.

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RECORD NOTE AND

REVIEWS

It is the purpose of this department to review monthly all worthwhile recordings. If at any time we happen to omit a record in which the reader is particularly interested, we shall be glad to give our opinion of the recording on written request. Correspondents are requested to enclose self-addressed stamped envelopes.

We believe that record buyers would do well order by title rather than by number such items as they may wish to purchase. Numbers are sometimes printed incorrectly in our sources.

All prices given are without tax.

Orchestra

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Opus 98*; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction of Eugene Ormandy. Columbia set M or MM-567, five discs, price \$5.50.

▲ Apologies are due to Columbia for our remarks about the blatancy of string tone noted in the Beethoven *Seventh Symphony*. Subsequent tests with that recording have shown that the stridency, due to an intensification of "highs," can be controlled in two ways. Perhaps the best way would be by using a filtering needle, such as a semi-permanent of good

quality or, preferably, a Victor Red Seal or Columbia Masterwork needle. However, those who have a high control which allows for gradations of tone will find that some manipulation of it will remove any undue brilliancy. Columbia's new Philadelphia recordings have some unusually fine traits; there is a liveness to the orchestra which is especially pleasing—a "bounce" to the tonal reproduction which is all too seldom noted in an orchestral recording. One would like a wider range of dynamics, particularly on the *pianissimo* side, but on the whole the dynamic range is better in the new Philadelphia and Philharmonic recordings than it was in the past—an improvement, to be sure more apparent in the *fortissimi* than in the *pianissimi*.

Ormandy's performance of this work has more decided attributes than his Beethoven *Seventh*. Again one finds that the authority of his drive and superb control of the orchestral forces are impressive; this is militant conducting of the finest order. While this type of conducting does not allow for the constraint and geniality which others bring to the music — Walter and Weingartner, for example — Ormandy's interpretation has admirable firmness and strength, and fine nobility. His arbitrary retarding on occasion is disturbing to the continuity of

a movement, in my estimation, but Ormandy has always had a leaning toward sectional effects. They are most apparent here in the opening movement. No one has ever played the scherzo of this symphony on records more convincingly than Ormandy; the *giocos* qualities of the music are most effectively set forth. I find his reading of the Passacaglia (finale) a better rounded one than Koussevitzky's, and tonally a more imposing one than Weingartner's, but he does not attain the fine continuity of the latter.

There are three appreciable performances of this work on records: the Weingartner, the Koussevitzky, and the present set. I exclude all others because the idiosyncracies of their conductors — Stokowski and Walter in particular—are unacceptable to me. Stokowski's arbitrary alterations of tempi and linear distortions and Walter's over-emotionalism are rather hard to swallow. Koussevitzky's performance is unfortunately marred by his consistent changes of tempo in the Passacaglia, which destroy the impelling force of the movement as a whole. Otherwise, his interpretation is a telling one. Weingartner's reading is one of his most admirable renditions of Brahms; it has nobility and strength, and a refinement in the slow movement which substantiates Brahms' poetic feeling in a wholly relevant manner. Had Weingartner been accorded the realistic reproduction that Ormandy was given, his set would offer a keener challenge to the present one. It is problematical whether many owning the Weingartner set will wish to dispose of it. They are advised to make comparisons between this and any they already own before disposing of an older recording.

—P. H. R.

MOZART: *Symphony in C major (Jupiter)*, K. 551 (7 sides); and *Così fan tutte — Overture*, K. 588 (1 side); played by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, direction of Bruno Walter. Columbia set M or MM-565, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ In October 1939 Victor brought forward a performance of this work by Bruno

Walter and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. This set has long been regarded by many as the most desirable exposition on records. Beecham's more majestic performance was not as well recorded. Because of this, Columbia undoubtedly decided to let Mr. Walter duplicate his interpretation. Comparison with Walter's earlier set proves this to be no mere duplication, but a much better performance in many ways. There is more thrust to the conductor's treatment of the opening movement, less loitering over phrases in the Andante, and a more forthright treatment of the finale. The animation he brings to his minuet is preferable to Beecham's slow treatment. This is the best set that Walter has made with the Philharmonic; the orchestra responds to his demands better and the playing is cleaner. Although he treats the "galant" qualities of the score with affection, and gives us a warm-hued performance of the deeply poetic Andante, he does not allow his feelings to tempt him into undue lingering or emotional excess. But, though one admires this performance, one nonetheless feels that Walter is not the man for the ideal reading of the *Jupiter*; he lacks, in my estimation, rhythmic firmness and the immutability which a Toscanini attains. In the overture, as in the symphony, Mr. Walter provides a good but not outstanding performance.

Although the tonal texture in the recording is clear and clean, the reproduction lacks essential beauty of sound; there is a gauntness and rigidity in the orches-

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tral quality which did not exist in Walter's earlier set.

The *Jupiter* was assuredly the crowning achievement of Mozart's symphonic writing, and strongly suggests that if the composer had lived longer he would have created even greater compositions in the form. Its sobriquet, provided by some unknown, is ambiguous, yet in some ways it expresses the bigness and strength, the dignity and solemnity of the music. Tovey thinks the title is absurd. Jahn thinks it was invented to indicate majesty and splendor rather than anything deeper. Blom feels that the last movement may be regarded as Jovian; but, he tells us, if Jove appears at all in this crowning finale, "he does so not as the thunderer but as the maker of the world."

—P. H. R.

OFFENBACH: *Orpheus in Hades—Overture*; played by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, direction of Karl Krueger. Victor disc 11-8761, price \$1.00.

▲ When the Constant Lambert-London Philharmonic performance of this overture was released in March 1940 (Victor disc 12604), our reviewer Mr. H. C. Schonberg pointed out that there were innumerable recordings of it available and that its popularity has been such that all sorts of instrumental arrangements of it have been made. Small wonder, H. C. S. said, "for it still remains one of the utter delights of the concert stage." Just why Victor decided to replace what was a superb performance of this music with the present version, one cannot say. Perhaps Mr. Krueger has a fondness for this score; it is a fondness that is shared by a great many other people. If the overture has paled for some, there will be plenty of young listeners discovering it for the first time and finding a lot of pleasure in it. It's that kind of music. Mr. Krueger gives the overture a good work-out, with perhaps a little more lingering on the sentimental side than Lambert permitted, but I daresay the majority will like this. In the finale, he builds up a rousing climax; this is the music of the Can-Can, and will be recognized by all who own the *Gaité Parisi-*

enne set. The recording here is sonorous and tonally sumptuous, which augurs well for future releases from the Detroit Symphony. If you already have the Lambert disc it is unlikely that you will want to replace it, but if you haven't that record by all means acquire this one. One finds light music like this enjoyable when one is dull and let-down.

It has always seemed to me that the spirit of Rossini's *William Tell Overture* was hovering at Offenbach's elbow when he wrote this music. In fact, it has several tunes which I seem to have heard elsewhere, though I can never tell where. All of which evidences Offenbach's ingenuity.

—P. G.

ROSSINI: *William Tell — Overture*; played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra, direction of Arturo Toscanini. Victor set DM-605, two 10-inch discs, price \$2.50.

▲ Although Toscanini's performance of this ever popular masterpiece is unmatched in dramatic power, the recording, made in the old Studio 8-H, has not the breadth or sonority which that studio can provide today. However, the reproduction is quite as good as some of the studio recordings we had from Europe around the time that this set was released. It dates from November 1939.

—P. H. R.

STRAVINSKY: *Scènes de Ballet*; played by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, direction Igor Stravinsky. Columbia set X or MX-245, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ As a recording this set is most praiseworthy; the natural sound of the Philharmonic reveals again the superior set-up that Columbia has devised in the latest reproductions of this organization. There is less blatancy in the Philharmonic recordings than in those of the Philadelphia, though the latter can be effectively reproduced (see our review of the Brahms *Fourth Symphony*).

There will undoubtedly be a wide divergence of opinion on the merits of this ballet score by Stravinsky. Opinions have been divided on the worth of all his recent ballet scores. As a craftsman, the

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composer again shows his adroitness; he knows the value of rhythmic contrast and his instrumentation is always extremely skillful. He wrote this music at the request of Billy Rose, and parts of the score were used in a dance sequence included in Rose's *Seven Lively Arts*. As presented here, the work comprises eleven effectively contrasted sections, but the brevity of the pieces sometimes makes for an episodic impression. Moreover, one has the feeling that the composer was striving for popular favor, but if this be true one feels that he compromised with his intentions, for the score reveals two different styles. As a complete ballet, the work might be highly effective, but as an orchestral suite, *sans* dancers, I do not find that the music is wholly successful. Some of the pieces seem reminiscent, and almost all of the effects the composer has exploited previously, and, in my estimation, to better advantage. There are good melodies and less good ones; some of the former could have been exploited more; the latter are fortunately shortlived.

The tendency of modern composers to blend two styles — the serious and the popular—more often than not results in a hybrid composition. However, familiarity has substantiated the value of many such works. It would be well for all listeners who admire Stravinsky's art to hear this recording. The realistic reproduction of the orchestra and the composer's competent conducting will add to the pleasure of those who find reasons for admiring the score. —P. H. R.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Waltz* from *Serenade* for Strings, Op. 48; and **GRIEG:** *The Last Spring*, No. 2 of *Two Elegiac Melodies*, Opus 34; played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, direction of Serge Koussevitzky. Victor disc 11-8727, price \$1.00.

▲ I have always had a dislike of encores which fill up last sides of sets; more often than not they ill suit the music they are coupled with. Both these pieces were extra sides to two sets—the first was the last record face in the Boston Symphony's performance of the Tchaikovsky *Fourth Symphony* (originally is-

sued in February 1937) and the other was the odd side in the same orchestra's performance of the Vivaldi *Concerto Grosso in D minor* (originally issued in April 1942). Since both pieces are excellently performed by Dr. Koussevitzky and his men, I find this reissue more important than some reviewers have found it. Certainly, the attractively melodious *Serenade* was completely overshadowed by the pompous finale of the *Fourth Symphony*, and Grieg's romantic sentiment should never be played in conjunction with the classical Vivaldi work.

I believe these pieces were originally coupled for an Army V-Disc, because I have read somewhere that the *Waltz* was one of the most popular of all pieces with our G.I. Joes. It is interesting to compare reproductions of the Boston Orchestra five years apart; it proves how consistent Victor was in obtaining fine results with this organization.

—P. H. R.

Keyboard

CHOPIN: *Fantasie Impromptu*, Opus Posthumous; *Waltz in D flat*, Opus 64, No. 1 (*Minute Waltz*); *Waltz in C sharp minor*, Opus 64, No. 2; and *Mazurka in B flat*, Opus 7, No. 1; played by José Iturbi (piano). Victor Showpiece Album SP-4, two 10-inch discs, price \$1.75.

▲ These records are put out under the title of *Music To Remember*, after the film based on the life of Chopin, in which Iturbi played off-stage the piano solos of Chopin.

Iturbi's performances of the *Fantasie Impromptu* and the two waltzes are admirable for the fleet-fingered technical accuracy and deftly handled tonal nuances. His Chopin playing is straightforward, with an objectivity of purpose and an emotional persuasiveness that does not call forth too much rubato. His playing of the *Mazurka* is stylistically less appreciable than the other pieces; he lacks the Polish bounce or lilt; one returns to Rubinstein's performance for this. Aspiring pianists will learn much from these

records about smooth technique and the avoidance of undue sentiment. And, in all except the *Mazurka*, Iturbi's style is worth emulating.

The distortion of Chopin's life which Hollywood perpetrated in *Song To Remember*, seems to have borne additional fruit, for we find some questionable statements in the notes that accompany these records. The fact that the Victor Showpiece Album is purely a commercial product does not excuse factual distortions in printed notes. It is rather unfortunate that Chopin's *D major Waltz* should have acquired the sobriquet of the "Minute Waltz", for this has misled some people into believing that it should be played in a minute's time. The assertion in the notes that its tempo prescribes "completion in a minute" is ridiculous; the composition, properly played, should take two minutes. Iturbi takes all of a minute and three quarters in his performance here.

Whether these recordings were dubbed from the sound-track of the film or not, I cannot say. However, the reproduction is very good; smoother, as a matter of fact, than a lot of recordings we have had lately. —P. H. R.

Voice

HIGHLIGHTS from OKLAHOMA (Rodgers): *Oklahoma* and *The Surrey With the Fringe on Top*; sung by James Melton; *People Will Say We're In Love*; sung by Melton and Eleanor Steber (soprano), and *Out of My Dreams*, sung by Miss Steber; *O What a Beautiful Morning* and *Kansas City*; sung by John Charles Thomas (baritone), with chorus in the latter. Orchestra conducted by Al Goodman in the Melton and Steber selections, and by Victor Young in the Thomas record. Victor set M-988, price \$2.75

▲ Big names do make an impression with a lot of people, and the majority are reluctant to admit that great singers can go wrong. Mr. Melton sings *Oklahoma* with plenty of pep, I like it much

better than his studied rendition of *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*. Neither of these songs was intended for the tenor voice, and I still think they are pleasanter sung by a baritone. Mr. Melton and Miss Steber do a nice job on the duet, but Miss Steber does not seem in her element in *Out of My Dreams*. I've watched this soprano's progress with interest; she's been urged to do popular numbers on the radio but I've never felt she was too happy about it. As for Mr. Thomas, he has a good time in *Kansas City* which he sings with plenty of rowdiness, but in *O What a Beautiful Morning* I am reminded that the baritone is no longer a young man. Reproductively, the set is completely satisfactory. —P. G.

LAURITZ MELCHIOR: Songs and Scenes from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Picture, *Thrill of a Romance*—*I Love You* (Grieg), and *Lonely Night* (Hubay, arr. G. Stoll) (disc 10-1147; *Serenade* (Schubert), and *Vive l'amour* (Folk Song, arr.) (disc 10-1148); *Please Don't Say No* (Fain), and *I Want What I Want When I Want It* (Victor Herbert) (disc 10-1049); sung by Lauritz Melchior (tenor), with orchestra. Victor set M-990, price \$3.50.

▲ The title of this album should be "Melchior Goes Hollywood". The noted Wagnerian tenor is in fine fettle and one suspects he was enjoying himself hugely, for he has proved in radio appearances that he can step out of the role of a great operatic tenor and conform to other patterns. Our own admiration of him as an operatic singer rather prejudices us against his stepping out of character, but people like to have noted artists do this

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sort of thing on occasion; they call it being human.

Mr. Melchior has already given us a record of Grieg's *I Love You* (Victor disc 1882), a recording more admirable in every way than this rendition; here the tenor uses two languages and turns operatic at the finale. The arrangement of a Hubay violin piece is to our way of thinking a pretty sad affair; the best one can say is that the tenor does about as much with it as one could expect. The familiar Schubert *Serenade* is sung in a new English text at a tempo somewhat faster than we are used to and with an operatic style which does not belong to this lovely song. *Vive d'amour* is a drinking song—how could Hollywood miss an opportunity to permit an operatic tenor such a moment? *Please Don't Say No* gives Melchior an opportunity to burlesque the popular singer, and there's every indication that he enjoyed it. He adopts a style that is mock-sentimental and his lingerings over one or two words provides the right touch. The Victor Herbert song seems to me ill-chosen, but no doubt Hollywood ties it in appropriately. Mr. Melchior seems quite out of his element in this one.

In the picture (which we have not seen) Melchior plays the part of a vacationing operatic singer who is the uncle of two young people in the story. This sort of role naturally permits him to burst forth in song in an informal manner, and this is perhaps the way we should accept the tenor's efforts here. He may be out of character but he's nonetheless a vital force. The less said about the orchestral accompaniments here the better. The recording is good.

—P. G.

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LOESSER: *Rodger Young*; and CRAWFORD: *The Army Air Corps*; sung by John Charles Thomas (baritone), with orchestra, and chorus conducted by Victor Young. Victor 10-inch disc, 10-1167, price \$.75.

▲ It looks as though *Rodger Young* may become as famous through the years as *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* and other celebrated war songs. It has all the qualities of a folk song. Mr. Thomas was probably well advised to record these two songs; the disc will appeal to his admirers in the Army and a lot of other folks will welcome his voicing of two popular Army songs. His excellent diction and manly forthrightness forestall any captious comments.

—P. G.

RODGERS: *Oklahoma* — *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* and *Oh, What a Beautiful Morning*; sung by Nelson Eddy (baritone) with orchestra conducted by Robert Armbruster. Columbia 10-inch disc 4314-M, price \$.75.

▲ Mr. Eddy seems to be enjoying himself in both these popular hits from *Oklahoma*, but although he sings both songs well and with admirable diction he fails to bring sufficient pep to his interpretations for my taste. Long familiarity with Alfred Drake's voicing of these lyrics tends to make me feel more cordial to him. There is something to be said for a singer of Drake's abilities, who having sung these songs night after night for long months, just naturally conveys the right animation and spontaneity. Mr. Eddy's admirers will not be disappointed in him, however, for he is in good voice. The recording is very good, and the surfaces are undisturbing.

—P. G.

ROMBERG: *Up In Central Park*—*Carrousel In the Park* and *It Doesn't Cost You Anything to Dream* (disc 10-1153); sung by Jeanette MacDonald (soprano); *Close as Pages in a Book* and *The Fireman's Bride* (disc 10-1154); sung by Jeanette MacDonald and Robert Merrill (baritone); *The Big*

Back Yard and *When You Walk in the Room* (disc 10-1155); sung by Robert Merrill. Orchestra conducted by Robert Russell Bennett. Victor set M-991, price \$2.75.

Miss MacDonald seems to be a "natural" for these songs and Mr. Merrill is equally at home. It has always seemed to me that Miss MacDonald had the requisite charm and feeling for operetta, and her ability to do a character number like *The Fireman's Bride* shows her versatility. In my estimation, everything about this set is tops; Bennett's live and zealous orchestral accompaniments are a pleasure to hear. And the singing has appropriate vitality and spontaneity. Mr. Merrill, who is well known to radio listeners, may be a newcomer to records, but one suspects he'll prove in no time at all one of the most popular baritones in the field. Add to the merits of this set good recording and surface noise at a minimum and you've got something that assures lasting enjoyment. As for Romberg's melodies, well, we don't think it's necessary to say anything at this late date; they've helped to make *Up In Central Park* a hit; and they certainly prove that the composer's inspiration is inexhaustible.

—P. G.

TWO FAMOUS COLORATURA ARIAS: *Lakmé*—*Bell Song* (Delibes) (in French), and *Lucia di Lammermoor*—*Mad Scene* (Donizetti) (in Italian); sung by Lily Pons (soprano) with Orchestra, conducted by Pietro Cimara. Columbia set M or MM-561, three discs, price \$3.50.

▲ In 1931, Miss Pons made abbreviated versions of both these scenes for Victor. That was a period of recording which, to my way of thinking, was kinder to the voice than the present. For this reason, there are a great many operatic recordings made around that time which have never been displaced. Whether Miss Pons' earlier efforts are displaced by her later recordings may well be a debatable question. Primarily, these recordings will appeal to all who like each scene in its entirety. In the case of *Lucia's Mad*

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Scene, I believe the inclusion of the chorus would have been an asset, but on this point perhaps not all listeners would agree.

Let it be said at the outset that Miss Pons gives a brilliant show, and that there is a remarkable clarity of tone in the recording. She brings charm to her singing of the *Bell Song* and there is a sweetness to her middle voice which is most appealing. She does not enlist our sympathies for the crazed Lucia as much as some singers do, but she does manage to build some dramatic excitement into a scene which I have never thought was as convincing as it might have been. Miss Pons is more appealing to me as a lyric singer than as a display artist, but her almost effortless ascents into alt have brought her a rightful fame. There is not the impeccable detail in her coloratura work that we can hear in the records of similar singers of the past. Her runs are almost consistently sung as glissando and she frequently spreads her tones and tends to be explosive, which may or may not be the reason for her lapses from pitch. These are distressingly in evidence in both arias. In my estimation, these recordings reveal both the best and poorest qualities of the singer's artistry. Columbia has given her brilliant and lifelike recordings, although it did not provide her with too good an orchestra.

—P. G.

SOME RECENT JAZZ

One of the most interesting events in the field of good recorded jazz is the issuance of six Victor Albums in what the Company calls its Educational Series. The albums are classed as "Hot Jazz" and feature Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton, McKinney's Cotton Pickers, Jelly Roll Morton, and the Quintet of the Hot Club of France.

The significant thing about these albums is the fact that they should be released at this time when the temptation to use every bit of available material for transitory commercial hit songs is very strong. The thought must be that there is now a

considerable group of music lovers who appreciate and will buy the more enduring part of the jazz output. It is possible that as time goes on, more and more people will decide that the popular melodies of the day (as ordinarily played) are heard often enough on the radio and will turn to the more rewarding jazz on records. I find that the Morton, Armstrong and Goodman albums have the best music in them. Jelly Roll's numbers, made with small orchestras as early as 1926, are always interesting and in the best of taste. *Deep Creek Blues* is particularly outstanding. The Goodman selections are the most consistently good of all. There are four sides made by his original trio and four by the quartet, all recorded in 1935 and 1936. The Armstrong sides, except for the first two, also show him at his best and feature not only his trumpet, but his infectious and original style of vocalizing. Hampton's album is more spotty, having in it such fine sides as *Sunny Side of the Street* or *Ring Dem Bells* along with the one-finger piano exhibitionism of *Chin Stomp*. The Hot Club of France album has some excellent guitar solos by Django Reinhardt, and this group has its followers, but its style is limited by lack of contrast in the instruments. The Cotton Pickers selections are interesting historically because they show the development of big band ensemble playing in the period 1928-1930; however, in spite of the large number of good musicians represented, these sides are hard to listen to. It is to be hoped that there are more "Hot Jazz" albums to come, and that the development of the greatest of the large bands, namely Duke Ellington's, will be traced on records.

Asch presents an album of three twelve-inch records featuring Mary Lou Williams with five other accomplished musicians. The instruments are well recorded and preserve a good balance throughout. In *Sew Drag*, based on a traditional twelve-bar blues, Mary Lou did not convince me, but in *St. Louis Blues* she justifies her title of "America's first lady of the jazz piano."

—Val Fidanque

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◆ The following issues are out of print: Nov. 1936; April 1937;

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